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General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts. Advance reports of various committees. 1908 and 1909

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Massachusetts Federation of Churches. Quarterly bulletin. Facts and factors. October 1910 "The part of the church in rural progress as discussed at the Amherst Conference."

Root, E. T. State federations

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Wells, G. F. An answer to the New England country church question.

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Wilson, W. H. Conservation of boys

Wilson, W. H. The country church

Wilson, W. H. The country church program

Wilson, W. H. Don't breathe on the thermometer

Wilson, W. H. The farmers' church and the farmers' college

Wilson, W. H. Getting the worker to church

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Wilson, W. H. The girl on the farm

Wilson, W. H. How to manage a country life institute

Wilson, W. H. "Marrying the land."

Wilson, W. H. No need to be poor in the country

Wilson, W. H. Synod's opportunity

Wilson, W. H. What limits the rural Evangel

.....

The church and country life. Pamphlet issued by the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

What Every Church Should Know About Its Community

WHETHER THAT CHURCH IS LOCATED IN A CITY, A TOWN, A VILLAGE, A SUBURB OR IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

PREPARED FOR THE

Commission on the Church and Social Service

OF THE

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

ISSUED BY

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

612 UNITED CHARITIES BUILDING

105 EAST 22D STREET

NEW YORK CITY

EXPLANATORY

WHY

Every church should have a constructive program for serving the social needs of its community, both individually and through the largest possible co-operation with other agencies for social uplift. This program should have as its objective the permeation of the community with the Christian spirit and the raising of the community life to the Christian standards. This community policy should become a permanent part of the life and activity of the church. But the program itself should be revised and enlarged as the community advances and new needs appear.

To formulate such a program each church must know the outstanding social needs of its community. It must from time to time review this group of facts in order to measure the progress of the community, and to estimate its own success in putting religion into the community life.

For this purpose this study is prepared. It merely seeks the absolute minimum of facts necessary in order to draft the broad outlines of the church's program. It will merely show the extent to which community conditions fall below the standards of the "Social Creed of the Churches," that is, the social deficit which calls for immediate action. Some obvious needs revealed by it must be immediately met. Others will require a more detailed program which will necessitate a more extensive study of conditions. Guidance for this can be obtained from denominational social service offices or from the office of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

HOW TO DO IT

To discover the facts called for by this study, a few selected persons should be gathered together. Some parts of the inquiry will need to be eliminated as irrelevant in certain communities, suburban and rural. A section of the study should be assigned to each individual, except that in the open country church the preacher had better himself do all the work that involves the responsibility of individuals

for community conditions. The questions should never be answered by mere opinions. They call for facts, or judgments based on facts which are to be personally observed. Where the information is obtainable from public officials it should also be verified by personal observation. In planning this study, call into council any local trained social service workers; they will be able to offer valuable suggestions.

When the inquiry is finished the group should be gathered together to study the total results. They should determine the need that calls most urgently for immediate action and then agree upon a plan to meet that need.

USING RESULTS

In developing a program to meet the needs outlined by the results of this study, the churches should use their existing organizations, assigning to each that sphere of work in which they are naturally interested. Church federations or federated groups of church men would be used to develop the program called for by these results. All other local agencies interested in social service work should also be called into consultation in developing a program.

The results of the whole study should be charted whenever possible. Suggestions regarding charts follow each section. These charts may be placed on exhibition for several days prior to a public meeting called to present the conclusions of the committee. In small towns there should be a community meeting. First the broad results of the inquiry should be presented, and the general policy demanded by them set forth in outline. Then attention should be focussed on that particular need which the committee has selected for immediate action.

The motto should be: "Take one thing at a time and concentrate on it until results are secured."

THE INQUIRY

BOUNDING THE COMMUNITY

The church or churches making this study must first determine what is their community. In a small town, village or suburb the boundaries are naturally determined by governmental limits. In the city a group of churches may determine their community by ward lines. A single church in the city and a church in the open country may bound its community by the limits of its ministration.

I.—POPULATION

The program of a church must change with the changes in population. Therefore, every church must know whether the population is increasing so as to demand additional church work, or decreasing so as to demand the removal of a church, or whether it is so changing in character as to necessitate a different type of church work.

The population facts here required can of course be obtained from census reports, federal and local. The second part of question three will be answered by observing the nationality of leading business men, office holders and politicians.

1. Total population.
2. Population by nationalities.
3. What nationality is becoming dominant?
   (a) In numbers.
   (b) In influence.
4. Is the population increasing or decreasing, and why?

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing proportion of nationalities.
2. Showing increase or decrease of population in last decade.

II.—CHURCH LIFE

No church can develop an adequate community program without co-operation with other churches. It must, therefore, see itself in relation to the total religious life of the community.

The facts here required are to be obtained, of course, from the custodians of church records and their value estimated by personal observation of attendance at various gatherings.

1. How many churches?
2. Are they federated?
3. Total number church membership in community.
4. Total Sunday School enrollment.
5. Total enrollment in church young peoples' societies.
6. Total attendance on churches.
   (a) Morning.
   (b) Evening.
7. Is there a ministers' association?
8. What part does it take in improving social conditions?
9. Is there a Y. M. C. A.? A Y. W. C. A.?
10. What are they doing to improve social conditions?
11. What statements are there made relating to the other churches?

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing ratio of churches to population.
2. Showing ratio of church membership and Sunday School enrollment to population.
3. Showing ratio of church attendance to population and to church membership.

III.—EDUCATION

The Federal Council stands for "the fullest possible development for every child, especially by the provision of proper education and recreation." Therefore, the churches must know whether the educational equipment of their community meets this standard. This knowledge will indicate what facilities for popular education ought to be provided by the church and what improvements in public education ought to be demanded by the church group.

The facts required can be secured from the educational authorities, but should be verified by close personal observation of the workings of the local educational system.

1. Population of school age.
   (a) Number in school.
   (b) Why is the balance not in school?
2. Is there medical inspection of school children? To what extent?
3. Are there manual training and domestic science? In what grades?
4. Is there vocational guidance? Continuation schools? To what extent?
5. What facilities are there for popular education?
   (a) Libraries.
   (b) University extension courses.
   (c) Social centers.
   (d) Lecture courses
   (e) Reading circles.

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing proportion of children out of school to population of school age.
2. Showing proportion of people reached by facilities for popular education to entire population above school age.

IV.—RECREATION

The Federal Council has the same standard for the provision of recreation as for education. This is because of the demonstrated relation of improper recreation and the lack of organized recreation to delinquency, and because also of the demonstrated power of proper recreation as a constructive moral force in the community life. Therefore must the churches know the recreation facilities and the recreation deficit of their community. This may demand the organization of recreation by the church; it will certainly require the formulation of a community program of recreation.

The facts required must be secured by personal observation of the workings of the agencies referred to.

1. What organized recreation is provided?
   (a) Playgrounds.
   (b) School athletics.
   (c) By religious agencies.
   (d) Boys' and girls' clubs.
   (e) By athletic, social, or recreational clubs.
2. What amusements are operated for private profit, and how are they regulated?
3. Which of these privately owned amusements are vicious, and in what respects?
4. What provision is there for the social life of young people living in furnished rooms?

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing population capacity of recreation provided.
   (a) By community.
   (b) By religious agencies.
   (c) By private organizations.
2. List the institutions and agencies of the community affecting the social life of childhood and youth in three parallel columns headed "healthful, harmful, doubtful."

V.—HEALTH

The churches stand for the conservation of health because of its religious values; because the body should be the temple of God; because to save life by the prevention of disease is just as religious a duty as to minister to the sick. Hence the churches must know the facts about the disease and death rate of the community and its causes. They can then carry out their religious ideals by co-operating with the local health officers, and by rousing the community to a more adequate protection of health.

The facts required can be secured from local health officers, but should be compared with the statements of physicians interested in public health.

1. (a) Death rate?
   (b) Infant mortality?
2. (a) How many health officers?
   (b) Their functions?
3. What is the annual budget of the Health Department?

4. Does the Health Department control contagious diseases? How?
   (a) Does it educate the community in measures of prevention? How?
5. In what ways do the churches co-operate with the Health Department?
6. What community provision is made for the care of the sick?
   (a) Hospitals.
   (b) Dispensaries.
   (c) Visiting nurses.
   (d) Do the churches share in or co-operate with this provision for the care of the sick?
7. What provision is made for the further care of convalescents discharged from hospitals?
8. What occupational diseases exist in your community? What measures are taken for their prevention?

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing death rate from various groups of diseases: contagious, bad air, infant, etc.
2. Showing in what section death rate from these diseases is greatest.
3. Showing what proportion of infants die before one year; before five years of age.
4. Showing per capita expenditures for health compared with expenditures for protection from fire, for police, education, etc.

VI.—HOUSING

The Federal Council stands for the protection of the family by the provision of proper housing because of the relation of housing to health and morals; because overcrowding means the removal of that privacy which is one of the great moral restraints. Therefore, the churches must know how the people are housed and must work for proper housing conditions.

The facts required can be secured from local officials responsible for sanitation, from local citizens or associations interested in good housing, but personal observation is essential.

1. Any slum section of unsanitary or congested housing.
   (a) What are the sanitary defects in the houses and surrounding the houses in this section?
   (b) Greatest number of people per room?
   (c) Who owns these houses?
2. What laws relating to such conditions? In what respects are they enforced and by whom?
3. How many boarding houses or furnished room houses?
4. How many people room in these houses?
   (a) Single.
   (b) Married.

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing density of population in most crowded section compared with other sections.
2. Showing number of people in most crowded rooms compared with number in average home.
3. Pictures of worst homes.

VII.—LABOR

The Federal Council stands for certain industrial conditions.* If the churches are to get these realized in their community they must be constantly informed concerning the community deficit in this field.

The figures here called for can be obtained from heads of industrial and commercial establishments, from the Chamber of Commerce or similar body, from the State Factory Inspector, and from officials of labor organizations. They should be verified by conversation with wage earners and personal observation of conditions.

1. In what ways do the churches show their interest in organized labor?

* See the Social and Industrial Creed of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

2. Number of workers.
   (a) Men. (b) Women. (c) Children; in industrial establishments.
   (a) Men. (b) Women. (c) Children; in mercantile establishments.
3. Working day.
   (a) Industrial establishments: longest; shortest; average.
   (b) Mercantile establishments: longest; shortest; average.
   (c) On the farm: longest; shortest; average.
   (d) In the kitchen: longest; shortest; average.
4. How much night work: for men; women; children?
5. How much seven day work: for men; women; children?
6. Wages: highest; lowest; average of lowest paid groups?
   (a) In industrial establishments: men; women; children.
   (b) In mercantile establishments: men; women; children.
   (c) For farm work: men; women; children.
   (d) Are wages generally paid by check?
7. What laws protect the health and safety of the workers? In what respect are they enforced?
8. What proportion of workers are periodically unemployed and why?
9. What provision is there to meet periodic unemployment?
10. Number of Trade Unions? Their total membership? Are they federated? Where do they meet?

Suggested Charts:

1. Proportion of those working more than ten hours to those working less; same for eight hours; same for seven day work.
2. Showing minimum living standards for family of five and proportion of male wage earners getting less than this amount.
3. Same for single women.

VIII.—IMMIGRANTS

If the churches are to develop a ministry to their foreign neighbors they must know those facts which will indicate possible points of contact. If they are to assist in the assimilation of the immigrant into the community life they must know what provisions are being made by the community for this purpose and must demand that adequate provision be made.

Some of the facts here required can only be obtained from immigrants themselves by some person who has business or friendship relations with them.

1. Does your immigrant population reside in colonies and where is it distributed?
2. Are housing and living conditions in immigrant sections below the average of the community? In what respects?
3. What is being done for the immigrants by their own societies?
4. What contact is there between the community and the immigrant: in night schools; social centers; in school buildings; in churches by:
   (a) Religious services.
   (b) Classes in English.
   (c) Classes in citizenship.

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing proportion of immigrant population to Protestant church membership.
2. Showing Protestant church provision for immigrant groups.
3. Showing intellectual and social points of contact between the community and the immigrant and their relation to population needs.

IX.—CHARITIES

The churches have always been active in the relief of the poor. If this work is to be efficient to-day every church must know the facts concerning the general relief agencies of the community, public and private, and must relate itself to a general community plan.

The information here required may be secured from the officers of the various agencies and institutions referred to.

1. What voluntary charitable agencies exist?
2. In what way are they organized for co-operative work?
3. What relief work is done by churches? What degree of co-operation between them?
   In what respects do the private charitable agencies and the churches co-operate?
4. What is the city, county or state provision for the relief of poverty and for the care of defectives and dependents? In what respects do the churches co-operate with these institutions?
5. What is done with an unemployed homeless person?

Suggested Charts:

1. Comparing amount of relief work done by churches to that done by private agencies; by public institutions.
2. Showing relief agencies of all kinds and their inter-relations.

X.—DELINQUENCY

If the churches are to adequately seek and save the lost they must know accurately the causes of delinquency and vice in their community and work unceasingly for their removal.

Facts demanded concerning the treatment of prisoners must not be taken from statements of officials alone, but must be secured by personal visitation.

1. (a) Any juvenile court?
   (b) Probation officers?
   (c) Separate confinement of juvenile prisoners before and after sentence?
2. What provisions are made for the release of adult prisoners on probation?
3. What are the conditions of cleanliness, health, and crowding in jail, police station, lock-up?

4. How are the prisoners employed?
5. What is done for the discharged prisoners?

Suggested Charts:

1. Showing photograph of interior of jail, police station or lock-up.
2. Showing how prisoners pass their time, by hours.
3. Showing proportion of probationers reclaimed.

XI.—PUBLIC MORALS

The church cannot stand as the defender of public morals, it cannot even protect the moral life of youth, unless it know definitely the local institutions and agencies that destroy morality. Eternal vigilance is the price of moral safety as well as liberty.

The facts here required are to be secured by the personal observation of mature persons; by the testimony of police officers and by conversation with persons of the "underworld."

1. Who is legally responsible for the care of public morals?
2. Number of saloons.
3. Number of gambling houses.
4. Number of houses of prostitution.
5. Is there a "segregated district?"
6. What regulations are there concerning the sale of liquor; gambling; prostitution; and how enforced?
7. What regulation is there of picture shows, theatres and public dance halls in their relation to public morals and how enforced?
8. What regulation is there regarding the sale of "drugs?" How enforced?

Suggested Charts:

1. Compare number of churches with saloons.
2. Compare number of churches with houses of prostitution.
3. Compare attendance on churches with that of picture shows and theatres.

XII.—CIVICS

The standards of the churches can only be realized in the community through municipal action. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God is only realized as the civic life of the community is organized according to the will of God. If the church is to express religion in civic life it must know the facts of local government.

Questions one and two demand a brief analysis of the form of local government, the material for which can be secured from the legal department or from some local student of civic conditions.

1. How is the community governed?
2. What are the departments of its government and the functions of their heads?
3. Is there any voluntary organization for the specific purpose of improving local government, such as a city club or civic league?
4. What points of contact have been developed between the churches and the governmental agencies of the community?

Suggested Chart:

A list of the various officials who can be called upon to meet certain social needs. In one column a statement of things desired for community improvement, in the other the name and title of the official responsible.

SUGGESTION FOR A GENERAL CHART

A general chart outlining broadly the social needs of the community can be made by putting in one column the various departments of social service, in another column the agencies at work in that community, and in the third column the urgent needs that yet remain to be met. The local church or churches can then be concentrated on one particular need which they may select. Such a chart (No. 1) summarizing conditions in a town of 18,000 is herewith reproduced. No. 2 summarizes conditions in a village of 500. No. 3 shows the conditions in that village affecting child welfare, both adversely and beneficially.

No. 1. A TOWN OF EIGHTEEN THOUSAND

Field	Agencies at Work	Urgent Needs
CHILD WELFARE	Churches Schools Juvenile Court County Children's Home Boy Scouts Young Ladies' Clubs	Social Centers in School Buildings Continuation Classes—Industrial Training Probation Officer—Appropriation by Commissioners Big Brothers—Big Sisters Organized Recreation and Social Life for Young People Children's Work in Library
CHARITIES	Township Trustees Associated Charities G.A.R. Women's Relief Corps Fraternal Orders	Co-operation Money Friendly Visiting
HEALTH AND HOUSING	Board of Health Department Public Service Two Hospitals	Adequate Health Department
LABOR	Trade Unions	One Day's Rest in Seven Minimum Living Wage—Shorter Work Day Industrial Efficiency
PRISONER	Suspended Sentence	Constructive Work for Adult—Minor Offenders Separate Room for Juvenile Arrests
CIVICS	Board of Trade Citizens' League Civic Improvement Ass'n	Suppress Gambling and Prostitution Regulate Dance Halls and Shows

No. 2. A VILLAGE OF FIVE HUNDRED

Field	Agencies at Work	Urgent Needs
CHILD WELFARE	Churches Schools Voluntary Organizations	Law Enforcement Organized Recreation Social Center and Library
CHARITY	Church, Ladies' Aid Sunday School, Epworth League Fraternal Orders County Relief Individual Relief	Co-operative Plan of Relief Plan for Tramps Friendly Visiting
HEALTH	One-fortieth of time of a Health Officer Four Doctors	Sewage Disposal Water Supply Adequate Health Department
LABOR	Commercial Club	**Shorter Day in Stores**
CIVICS		Civic Organization Progressive Officials Progressive Voters

No. 3.

THE CHILD IN ACCOUNT WITH A VILLAGE OF FIVE HUNDRED SOULS

Cr.	Dr.
Two Churches	Gambling
One Sunday School	1. Slot Machines
One High School	2. Poker
One Grammar School	3. Pooling on Races
Epworth League	4. Cards
Lecture Course	Pool Room
Annual Field Day	Dance Hall
Orchestra and Band	Profanity
Junior Music Club	Illicit Sale of Liquor
High School Athletics	Sunday Base Ball
	Sunday Work and Pleasure
	Loafing, Misdirected "Gang"